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Rivers Praises CIA For Student Subsidy

From Staff and Wire Reports

WASHINGTON — A House Armed Services subcommittee chaired by Rep. L. Mendel Rivers Friday commended the Central Intelligence Agency for its controversial behind-the-scenes support of the National Students Association and said the arrangement had helped block a Communist takeover in youth groups.

Not only was the CIA correct in making the deal but would have been derelict in its duty had it turned down the NSA plea for help, subcommittee said in a statement issued jointly by Rivers and Williams Bates, R-Mass., ranking minority member.

The subcommittee endorsement came after a lengthy closed-door meeting with CIA Director Richard Helms and others who were not identified in the statement.

The sole reason for the CIA subsidy, the statement said, was to provide financial support for NSA overseas activities.

The money was used, it was stressed, to finance participation of American students "holding independent views" in international meetings to "counter Communist attempts to take over foreign student organizations."

Espionage was in no way involved, the Rivers statement stressed, "but the survival of freedom was."

He emphasized that Communists have been concentrating on students groups since the end of World War II in "their effort to control people and ideas" and said that "by 1950 were successful to the point they had little opposition."

It was, in light of that situation that NSA leaders sought the CIA help "which was forthcoming — and has now served its purpose."

The statement stressed, too, that full details of the CIA-NSA arrangement, though not made public, "had been known to every administration since 1952."

The statements by Rivers and Bates came as a NSA spokesman accused the CIA of threatening NSA leaders in an effort to keep them from disclosing the secret subsidy.

"The CIA intimidated them with personal threats ranging from character assassination to placing pressure upon the 'Establishment' to reject them from responsible roles in American society," said Philip Werdell, NSA press liaison representative.

The CIA received "sensitive information" from some National Student Association members abroad and warned the student leaders they might go to prison if they disclosed the link with the spy agency, Brown said.

Sam Brown, chairman of the NSA supervisory board, told a news conference that some of the NSA officers were aware of the student group's association with the CIA and gathered sensitive information "and reported it to their CIA counterparts."

The information, he said, dealt with personalities and politics in student organizations abroad, rather than hard intelligence.

Brown reported some of the dealings with the Central Intelligence Agency at the close of an emergency session of the NSA board prompted by disclosure that the CIA had subsidized NSA overseas programs for 15 years.

Brown said the CIA had used some 20 foundations and individuals as cover to channel

end the practice of such subsidies and shift them to open budget items.

The NSA subsidy also was praised by Sen. John G. Tower, R-Tex., who said it "made it possible for American students to present the American side at international events."

He said "Communists sent their carefully coached spokesmen" to world student conferences and he saw no reason why "the United States should apologize for helping send students to international conferences as voices of the free world."

But Sen. Stephen M. Young, D-Ohio, said the CIA should be abolished. Young said: "We no doubt need an intelligence organization, but this is an organization which has stepped out of bounds in recent years."

The New York Times reported Friday that the CIA was involved not only with student groups but with business and political organizations that have contacts with foreigners.

The Times named five groups it said had been receiving money from the CIA through private foundations. They were:

—The Pan American Foundation, which finances U.S.-Latin American student exchange programs and is connected with the University of Miami (Fla.).

—The American Society of African Culture, based in New York, which was said to supply information on American Negro culture to African universities and broadcast stations.

—The International Marketing Institute, which conducts marketing seminars each year at Harvard University for foreign businessmen.

—American Friends of the Middle East, headquartered in Washington, said to sponsor travel to the Middle East and finance some publications dealing with the area.

—International Development Foundation, New York, identified as sponsor of training programs for improving social programs for low-income groups in Latin America.